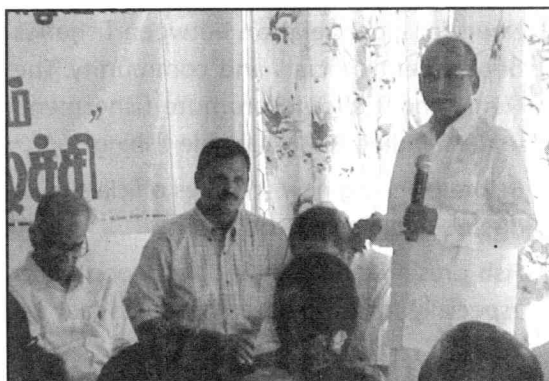


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- ♦ Fishermen may be taught the latest fishing technologies.
- ♦ Exchange programmes may be organized so that fishermen will learn from practices elsewhere
- ♦ Knowledge centers should be established in every fishing village
- ♦ Producing medicines from fish and starting a pharmaceutical production unit should be explored. Algal growth from sea water may be explored as an alternative commercial activity.
- ♦ Agriculture activities near the shore, for example cultivation of *thuvarai*, must be explored.
- ♦ Degree and Diploma courses on latest fishing technology may be started by the Pondicherry University.
- ♦ Training may be provided in ornamental fish growing
- ♦ Statistical data may be maintained for each fishing village for pre and post ban periods
- ♦ Social surveys may be carried out for fishing villages
- ♦ Fish breeding zones in the Pondicherry coast may be identified and time series data on the



extent of breeding may be gathered. Such data would facilitate identification of locations for artificial coral reefs to increase fish production

- ♦ Steps may be taken to prevent factories polluting the ocean by chemical effluents Fisheries Department should employ people from the fishing community
- ♦ Government must ban sale of mother prawns and must buy them for breeding on shore; the newborns can then be left in the sea to increase production

### Way Forward:

- ♦ ICT will help to foster safe, responsible and remunerative fisheries
- ♦ ICT can be effectively used to spread a voluntary code of conduct for achieving the goal of "Fish for All and For Ever"
- ♦ ICT can be mobilised for promoting market driven enterprises / livelihood opportunities during the non-fishing season
- ♦ ICT for coastal area prosperity should be the goal.

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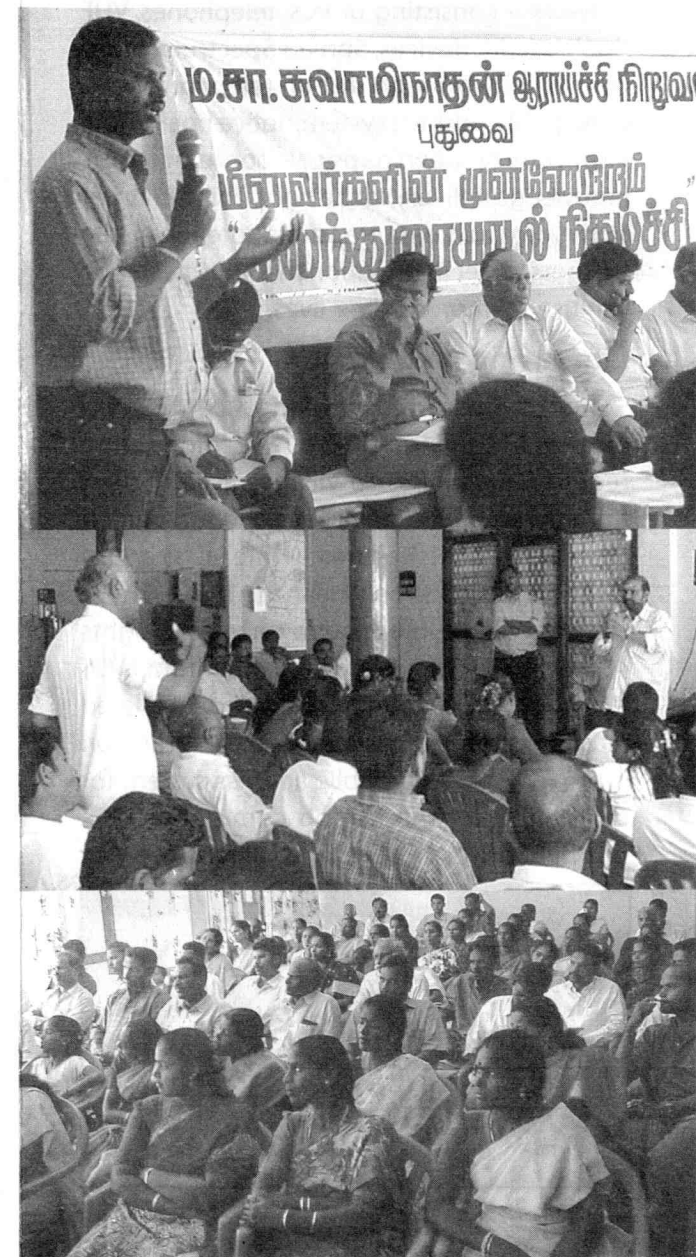


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# Voice of the Fishing Community

Annexure 32



## Empowering the Marginalized

Since 1998, M S Swaminathan Research Foundation has been working in ten villages in Pondicherry in Southern India where it has established Rural Knowledge Centers connected by a hybrid wired and wireless network – consisting of PCs, telephones, VHF duplex radio devices, Spread Spectrum, email connectivity through dial-up telephone lines, VSAT, public address system, notice boards and community newspaper – for electronic knowledge delivery to the poor. This facilitates both voice and data transfer, and enables the villagers to get information that they need and can use to improve their lives.

### Life saving value of ICT

Some of our rural knowledge centers are located in Fishing Villages. The information requirements in these villages are different from those in interior villages and focused on the safety of fishermen while at sea and location of fish shoals near the shore. These villages receive information on wave heights 48 hours in advance, downloaded from a US Navy web site and interpreted and translated into Tamil, the local language. The information is broadcast over a public address system for the benefit of the fishing community. The public address system is also used for



announcing various Government schemes related to fishing community on a regular basis, fish market details, employment news, distribution of rice, kerosene and sugar in the local fair price shop, etc. Through the Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) fishermen get the information on Potential Fishing Zones.

### Voice of the Fishing Community

Every year the Government of India implements a ban on fishing for 45 days. This is mainly for facilitating reproduction of fishes (growing time for fingerlings). During the period fishing community faces severe livelihood problems. MSSRF has conducted several interaction meetings specifically to address these problems. In these meetings the fishing community made many suggestions and raised many questions. These include:

- ♦ Alternative business opportunities should be created in the fishing related industry [Knitting fishing nets, Fish feed production, Production of fish pickles, Fancy items from shells, etc.]
- ♦ Every year the Government is giving loan for buying big boats against immovable assets as security. Since there is a prohibition by the Government from issuing "Patta" [Land ownership certificate] to those living within 500 meters of the coastline many of them cannot use their land or house as security and they do not have anything else to offer as security. For getting the loan the Government surety procedure and other related matters need to be simplified.
- ♦ A National "Fish for All and For Ever" movement was launched in Kolkata in



December, 2003. This programme has to be extended to Pondicherry.

- ♦ During the 9<sup>th</sup> five-year plan period the Government earned Rs.3,750 million from fishing. But only Rs.150 million were spent on fishermen welfare schemes.
- ♦ Good roads and transport facility are needed in coastal areas for transporting the fishes from shore to market quickly. At present, a large portion of the income is spent on transportation.
- ♦ Children of fishing families need good schools.
- ♦ Training for fish preservation and export is needed for aged fishermen and fishing community women.
- ♦ Need for close relation between fisheries department officials and community. The Department should promote fishermen's understanding of 'sustainable fishing'.
- ♦ Before planning new schemes officials must discuss with fishing community.
- ♦ Fish preservation unit and four food parks especially for fish related products may be set up.